SATPAL MAHARAJ):; (a) No, Sir. The global tender was floated in April, 1994.

(b) The technical bid was opened on 15.9.1994.

(c) The price bid was opened on 19.10.1995.

(d) M/s. Burn Standard Company Ltd. (BSCL) had sought deemed export status. However, it is not true that their bid was not considered on this account. The bid document provided that if the bids were submitted after taking into account "deemed export" benefits, then a specific condition of the bid document was to be accepted by the bidder without any reservation and its non-acceptance would render the bid non-responsive. This specific item of the bid document was again brought to the notice of bidders while inviting 2nd stage financial bids so that condition of a bid becoming non-responsive were crystal clear to all bidders. Despite this, M/s. BSCL gave stipulations in their bid which rendered their bid non-responsive.

(e) The bidders from the private sector also quoted after taking into account deemed export benefit and their bids were conforming to the conditions laid down in the bid document and were treated as responsive bids.

(f) Yes, Sir. The bid document permited 15 per cent quantity variation at the time of the award of contract without any change in the price or other terms and conditions. The option of quantity variation was to be exercised at the time of award after the bid evaluation was duly approved by the relevant authorities. The enhanced contracted quantity could be accommodated within the budget. In terms of the bid document it was not necessary to inform other bidders about the variation in the quantity.

Reclamation of Desert Lands in Gujarat and Rajasthan

2596. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Gujarat and Rajasthan have large areas of desert which is increasing day-by-day;

(b) whether Government have any plan to use the desert land for agriculture and plantation;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the amount spent in Gujarat and Rajasthan on the above and the area of land reclaimed for the purpose;

(e) whether there is any plan to collaborate with Israel Government; and

(f) whether Government plan to offer desert land to private agencies?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) The estimated desert area in Gujarat and Rajasthan is 62,180 sq km and 1.36 lakh sq km respectively. According to a study it is not increasing.

(b) to (d) A statement is annexed (*see* below).

(e) Yes, Sir, The Department of Waste Land Development in collaboration with the State Government has taken steps to take up a pilot project for plantation of Jojoba in Rajasthan and an Executive Programme has been signed in March, 1995.

(f) There is no proposal with the Government of India to offer desert land to private agencies.

Statement

A Centrally Sponsored Scheme namely Desert Development Programme (DDP) under the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment is in operation in the States of Gujarat and Rajasthan to combat desertification through sand-dune stablisation, shelter-belt plantation, afforestation, grass land development, soil and moisture conservation and water resources development.

The amount spent, since inception of the programme, 1977-78, till 1994-95 was Rs. 3312.68 lakhs and Rs. 43926.21 lakhs in case of Gujarat and Rajasthan respectively. The area treated under the three core sectors viz. land development water resources development & afforestation and pasture development during the same period was 0.54 lakh ha. and 3.57 lakh ha. in Gujarat and Rajastahn respectively.

Besides, following three schemes are also being implemented in Gujarat and Rajasthan by the Department of Wasteland Development for development of non forest wasteland through land based activities:—

(i) Integrated Wastelands Development Project (IWDP).

(ii) Grant-in-Aid to Voluntary Agencies, and

(iii) Technology Development, Extension and Training (TDET).

Expenditure and physical achievement under these schemes during the last two years i.e. 1994-95 and 1995-96 in the States of Gujarat and Rajasthan are given below:—

Scheme	Gujarat		Rajasthan	
	Expenditure (Rs. in lakhs)	Achievement (in ha.)	Expenditure (Rs. in lakhs)	Achievement (in ha.)
1. IWDP	872.32	50,089	1012.99	47,685
2. Grants-in-Aid	8.11	108	26.52	354
3. TDET	97.11	800	333.84	1,049

Poaching of Lions in Gir Forests

2597. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:
SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has beendrawn to rempant illegal poaching of lions in the Gir Forests;

(b) if so, how many cases of poaching of lions from Gir Forest reserves have come to light during 1994, 1995 and 1996 so far; and

(c) what steps have been taken to effectively prevent such poaching of the endangered Gir lions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) and (b) There is no rampant poaching of lions in the Gir forests of Gujarat. The cases of lion poaching detected in the last 3 years is as under:

1994-95 —Nil
1995-96 —2
1996-97 —3 (upto June, 1996)

(c) The State Government have reported that necessary steps have been taken to strengthen the existing protection and conservation measures for Gir lions. These include: Strengthening enforcement system, including wireless network; implementing ecodevelopment programme; developing habital for wildlife; and deploying additional manpower to strengthen the protection measures. Besides, in the poaching cases mentioned above, 13 persons were arrested, 3 guns were seized, 3 forest officials suspended,